DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 224 285 FL 013 181

AUTHOR Cook, Guy
TITLE The Use of Literary Extracts in the Teaching of EFL.
INSTITUTION London Univ. (England). Inst. of Education.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 23p.; In its "English Literature for EFL," Working Documents 2.
AVAILABLE FROM Institute of Education, London University, 20 Bedford Way, London W.C. 1, England.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Second Language Programs; *English (Second Language); Fiction; Higher Education; Instructional Materials; *Literature; *Prose; *Reading Material Selection; Second Language Instruction

ABSTRACT

The use of extracts from works of prose literature for teaching English as a foreign language at intermediate and advanced levels is considered. Attention is directed to the effectiveness of using such extracts as a means of improving the English of foreign learners, and to criteria for the choice and presentation of the extracts. The last six paragraphs of "The Dead," the final short story of James Joyce's "Dubliners," is used to illustrate how literary discourse may both lose meaning and acquire false meaning when extracted from the full text to which it belongs. It is intended to demonstrate one of the worst choices that can be made by a teacher or editor. The extract contains an unusual density of connections with the text that precedes it. It does this partly because it is conclusive to that text, and partly because of the nature of its subject: the thoughts of a man at the end of an emotionally charged day. It is implied that such a passage is unsuitable for teaching purposes. Criteria for selection of extracts include the following: (1) extracts should be chosen that do not encourage the student to create "false texture" by making interpretations which, though viable within the extract, are demonstrably false in context; (2) extracts should, where possible, be introductory rather than continuing or conclusive; (3) the number of allusions to information given in the preceding text should be analyzed and annotated, omitted, or altered; and (4) extracts whose mood is internally created should be chosen in preference to extracts whose mood is created by conjunction with the preceding text. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED224285

THE USE OF LITERARY EXTRACTS IN THE TEACHING OF EFL

Guy Cook

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Institute of EDUCATION
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

FL013181

From "English Literature for EFL," Working Documents 2

Department of English as a Foreign Language, Univ of London Inst of Education

Table of Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	55
2. Examination of a particular extract	56
2.1 The nature of the analysis	56
2.2 Text and extract	57
2.3 False texture	58
2.4 The conclusive nature of the extract	59
2.4.1 The extract as conclusive to Dubliners	60
2.4.2 The extract as conclusive to "The Dead"	60
2.5 Mood	64
2.6 Deviation	65
2.7 Table of the cohesive ties within the extract	69
3. Conclusion	72
Appendix	
Extract from "The Dead" by James Joyce	73
References	74

1. INTRODUCTION

Extracts from works of prose literature are frequently used in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language at intermediate and advanced levels: as reading and listening comprehensions, passages for translation, and starting points for general discussion. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the assumptions, both explicit and implicit, behind the use of such extracts, to judge their effectiveness as a means of improving the English of foreign learners, and to arrive at criteria concerning their choice and presentation.

Apart from the convenience of the enormous range of ready-made texts available in English literature, the most widely held assumption about the use of literary extracts in EFL is the rather vague one that they acquaint the learner with the "best" English and will somehow whet his appetite for more. As has often been pointed out, the study of literary English is seldom suited to the foreign learner's needs, and the mastery of literary texts has little bearing on the learner's needs to understand or produce more functional written or spoken forms of the language. It is, moreover, often in its deviation from the norms of English grammatical and lexical usage that literature achieves excellence. While such deviations may please the native speaker by the freshness they may bring to his linguistic world, they can do little but confuse the foreign learner. Authors addicted to such deviations - a category which includes the best English writers - are perhaps best avoided with all but the most advanced foreign learners. New shades of meaning or syntax can hardly be appreciated before their everyday usage has been fully assimilated.

There is a further and perhaps more crucial reason why the study of literary extracts may be of little use to the foreign learner. For obvious reasons of convenience, literary extracts are usually restricted to - at most - two or three pages. They are usually taken from the middle of a work. Yet the "excellence" by which the choice of the extract is justified may not reside within the extract but in its relation to the preceding and following text from which it has been artificially isolated for pedagogic purposes. By the

very act of extraction we have destroyed the superiority of style which we seek to demonstrate. It is this act of destruction through extraction with which this article is particulary concerned.

2. EXAMINATION OF A PARTICULAR EXTRACT

Examination of a particular extract may illustrate these two points more fully. The extract chosen for analysis is the last six paragraphs of "The Dead", the final short story of James Joyce's Dubliners. This passage appears as a passage for comprehension in an anthology which is fairly widely used in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Italy, and is in many ways typical of the kind of extract used in many similar anthologies throughout Europe. (The entire extract is presented in Appendix A, below.) This passage has been deliberately chosen for the purposes of this paper to illustrate how literary discourse may both lose meaning and acquire false meaning when extracted from the full text to which it belongs. It is intended to demonstrate one of the worst choices that can be made by a teacher or editor. Yet it is hoped that an analysis of the faults of this passage as an extract for use in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language may not be purely destructive, but may point to positive criteria regarding the choice and presentation of an extract. It is also hoped to show that the same stylistic features may account both for the excellence of a passage when considered as part of a text and its unsuitability for study as an extract isolated from that text, especially its "deviant" language forms (see Section 2.6).

2.1 The nature of the analysis

The analysis below will be stylistic rather than linguistic or critical. Widdowson defines stylistics as follows:

> "By'stylistics' I mean the study of literary discourse from a linguistics orientation and I shall take the view that what distinguishes stylistics from literary criticism on the one hand and linguistics on the other is that it is a means of linking the two." (Widdowson 1975, p. 3)

and he goes on to define the concern of the literary critic as follows:

"not principally with the way the signals of the artist are constructed but with the underlying message which an interpretation of these signals will reveal." (Widdowson 1975, p. 5)

The linguist on the other hand

"is primarily concerned with the codes themselves and particular messages are of interest in so far as they exemplify how the codes are constructed." (Widdowson 1975, p. 5)

Stylistics then is concerned both with interpretation and with the codes themselves; with both what the text means and why and how it means what it does; and this essay will attempt to be stylistic because both the linguistic and the literary critical approaches are important in assessing the value of an extract for pedagogic purposes.

2.2 Text and Extract

It is necessary to define the terms text and extract. The notion of text is semantic rather than grammatical. Though a single sentence may form a whole text this is not necessarily, and indeed rarely, so. A single sentence is always a complete grammatical unit; it is seldom semantically complete. It gains meaning either from the situation in which it is uttered or written or from the other sentences with which it occurs. Texture, or the quality which binds sentences into a text, depends firstly on register, the necessity to combine linguistic features with situational features to create meaning, and secondly upon cohesion, the semantic (and in some cases lexico-grammatical) ties between one sentence and another.

"There is one specific kind of meaning relation that is critical for the creation of texture: that in which ONE ELEMENT IS INTERPRETED BY REFERENCE TO ANOTHER." (Halliday and Hassan 1976, p. 11)

Text then, with the exception of single sentence texts, is a number of sentences bound together by cohesive ties, and giving meaning to each other. Extract may be regarded as a part of a text, artificially separated for purposes of quotation or study from the other sentences, with which, to a greater or lesser extent, it coheres.

In a literary message texture is much more likely to be created by internal cohesion than by any reference to the situation in which

the message is received. Yet the density of cohesive ties may vary greatly. The extraction and isolation of a passage from a literary text for pedagogic purposes will necessarily involve the cutting of cohesive ties and the rendering of certain semantic relations within the original text meaningless. The degree to which meaning is destroyed will depend upon the density of cohesive ties referring to parts of the text not included within the extract; the greater the density, the more meaning will be destroyed. As by far the greatest part of cohesive ties are anaphoric (referring to the preceding text) and not cataphoric (referring to the following text) the least destructive form of extraction is that which takes either the beginning of a text or at least a part of a text which represents a new introductory departure in the narrative. Extracts which either conclude a text or a recognisable section of text should be avoided.

2.3 False Texture

Provided it does not break sentences, a literary extract is always grammatically intact, but seldom semantically intact. It may gain, in isolation, what may be termed false texture, as it is the natural tendency of a reader, when confronted with an extract, to treat it as a text.

"If he finds evidence in the situation, (the reader) can accept the passage in question as a complete text. If not, he has to seek textual evidence, and therefore to assume that the original passage is related to some preceding piece by cohesion - otherwise he can only regard it as incomplete. It is not suggested that he performs these operations as a systematic search in this or any other order. The important fact is that the hearer typically assumes that any passage which for external reasons OUGHT to be a text ... is in fact a text: and he will go to enormous lengths to interpret it as complete and intelligible. This is an aspect of the very general human tendency to assume in the other person an intention to communicate, an assumption which is no doubt of very great value for survival." (Halliday and Hassan 1976, p. 54)

This tendency is aggravated by the common literary device of employing cataphoric cohesive ties at the opening of a narrative to stimulate interest and project the reader's attention forward. Thus "The Sisters", the first short story of Dubliners, begins:

"There was no hope for him this time: it was the third stroke."

and employs three reference items: a pronominal "him", the definite article "the" (implying a previous specification), and the quantative ordinal "third" (implying a previous two instances). A similar system of unexplained reference might be deduced by the student (and teacher) when confronted with the opening sentence of the extract from "The Dead":

"She was fast asleep."

and some significance derived from the fact that the exact identity of the female referred to by the pronominal "she" is not immediately specified. Yet this is not the case. The first quotation illustrates a literary device, while the second is a mere accident of where the extract was begun, the pronominal "she" having been quite clearly defined in the preceding text as Gretta, Gabriel's wife, together with a study of her character. To interpret the second quotation in terms of the first is a perversion of the original text, and an editor presenting the extract for study might be truer to the text to add a note on the name, age and character of Gretta than to leave the original "she" unaltered.

It is hoped to establish that the extract from "The Dead" is particularly dense in cohesive ties, and that a large part of its meaning (and merit) is destroyed by its being taken out of context, and that the absence of meaning created by decontextualisation tempts the learner and the teacher to create a false text by imposing meanings on the extract which are demonstrably not present in the whole text. By examining the nature of the connections between the extract and the text from which it is taken, it is hoped to establish criteria for use in the selection of literary extracts whereby these dangers are reduced.

2.4 The conclusive nature of the extract

The extract given below is simultaneously part of two texts: the smaller text of "The Dead" and the larger text of Dubliners to which "The Dead" belongs. Any extract is one of three predominant types (though there

is a considerable overlap between the three): introductory, continuing or conclusive: and we might well take this as an order of preference when selecting extracts for teaching. The extract below is conclusive: it is at once the end of "The Dead" and the end of Dubliners and the sleepless thoughts of Gabriel which it describes bring together not only the thoughts and preoccupations of his evening, but also the main themes of Dubliners.

2.4.1 The extract as conclusive to Dubliners

Dubliners contains fifteen short stories concerned with various aspects of youth, maturity and disillusion, the contrast between public and private behaviour, and varying forms of perception. Though there is no exact thematic sequence we may say that the book moves from an investigation of immature perception to one of mature perception, that it begins and ends with a contrast of youth and death and the most intimate and private aspects of thought, while its central stories are concerned more with social interaction and the manifestations rather than the internal workings of personality. The events of "The Dead" of which this extract forms a part, bring all these themes together. In the character of Gabriel all the various levels of social interaction are examined, and we see him firstly in a crowd of strangers and acquaintances, secondly with his family, thirdly alone with his wife, and fourthly completely alone; all these levels are touched upon or reinvoked in the last paragraphs of "The Dead". In Gretta's story of her affair with Michael Furey the contrast of youth and death reoccurs as does the theme of the disillusion that comes with maturity. While ostensibly concerned solely with Gabriel's thoughts, the extract, taken in the context of Dubliners brings together and connects the main themes of all the stories.

2.4.2 The extract as conclusive to "The Dead"

This extract surveys the thoughts of a man who is sleepless for many reasons: the excitement of the party at his aunts' house earlier in the evening; the effects of alcohol; thwarted sexual desire; his being in a strange hotel room rather than in his own house; the disturbing effect of the revelation just concluded by his wife. These causes of his wakeful mental turmoil are not evident in the extract, though they are in the whole text of "The Dead". His thoughts, stimulated by the

events of the evening, range backward in time to his wife's youth and the premature death of Michael Furey, and forward, to the imagined death of his Aunt Julia. Encouraged by his wife's story of her youth in another part of Ireland and a conversation held earlier in the evening about the possibility of a holiday in the West of Ireland, they range geographically too, away from Dublin, surveying the whole of Ireland - a fact which also contributes to the unity of Dubliners, a book which, by wide-ranging selection, creates an illusion of surveying the Irish personality in toto.

Given these directions in Gabriel's thoughts it is not surprising that many phrases and sentences in the extract allude to information already given in the earlier parts of "The Dead". Though grammatically intact, and thus open to misinterpretation by the reader of the passage as extract, these allusions are, in fact, not open to any true interpretation without reference to the preceding text. (The word 'allusion' is used here to distinguish these more general connections from 'reference', a specifically defined form of cohesion cf 2.6, below.) We can set out these allusions, and the specific information in the preceding text with which they connect, as follows:

1) "So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake." - an allusion to Gretta's affair with Michael Furey, interpretable in isolation, but incapable of revealing the essential innocence and immaturity of that affair unless taken in context.

2) "It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part, he, her husband, had played in her life" - an allusion to Gabriel's earlier thoughts, during the journey from the party to the hotel, of exactly what part he had played in her life.

3) "That time of her first girlish beauty" - a connection between Gabriel's earlier thoughts on the passing of his wife's good looks and her own story.

4) "for which Michael Furey had braved death" - a specific allusion to Michael Furey's contraction of pneumonia while standing in the cold in the hope of seeing Gretta; a pathetic and absurd manner of braving death which is not elucidated in this extract alone.

5) "He wondered at his riot of emotions of an hour before." - an allusion to Gabriel's growing sexual desire for his wife during their journey to the hotel and after their arrival. The nature of the "emotions" has already been given.

6) "his aunts' supper" - an allusion to the party with which the first part of "The Dead" is concerned. The warm, humorous and crowded nature of this first part of "The Dead" has a crucial contrastive effect when taken in conjunction with the ending: an effect which is completely lost in the isolated extract.

7) "his own foolish speech" - an allusion to the highly successful and well-received speech which Gabriel had made to his aunts' guests after supper, revealing a side of his character which is not present in the final paragraphs of the story. This phrase serves to underline the change in Gabriel's emotions which has taken place since his wife's story; the adjective "foolish" indicates the alteration in his self-image which subsequent events have caused.

8) "the wine and dancing, the merry-making when saying good night in the hall, the pleasure of the walk along the river in the snow." - allusions to specific episodes in the preceding text, reinforcing, by contrast, the changes which have taken place in the mood of Gabriel and of the story.

9) "the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse" - an allusion to a humorous anecdote told by Gabriel about his dead grandfather at the party and a further indication of his change of mood. This phrase is meaningless when taken out of context, as the reader knows neither the identity of Patrick Morkan, not the story of his horse. Readers nevertheless attempt to interpret such phrases. During the preparation of this paper several English Language students unfamiliar with "The Dead" as a whole were presented with this extract and asked to interpret this phrase. Answers included: "a reference to a poem", "a colloquial comparison", "a figure from Irish legend", "an event in the day's newspaper", but never a simple "Don't know".

10) "when she was singing'Arrayed for the Bridal'" - an allusion to Aunt Julia's performance at the party. The irony of her choice of song is lost in extract, for the fact that Aunt Julia is an old maid is information given in the preceding text.

11) "that same drawing room" - the "same" as the one in which so much festivity has recently taken place: a contrast which is weakened out of context.

12) "Aunt Kate ... crying and blowing her nose." - a re-evocation of the character of Aunt Kate, which may serve to remind the reader of Gabriel's earlier altruism and thoughtfulness towards his ageing aunts, thus making his present loneliness more poignant.

13) "the room" - a hotel room away from their home (as previously stated during conversation at the party), perhaps symbolic of the change which has come about in their marriage.

14) "He had never felt like that himself towards any woman" - Considering the text as a whole the reader might well conclude that this judgement of Gabriel's upon himself is drastically unfair.

15) "the partial darkness" - an allusion to the earlier description of the room, in which there is no light except for the glow of the streetlight outside the window, a fact which gives a visual setting for the scene of the extract, but is not present within it.

16) "he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree" - an allusion to Gretta's earlier description of Michael Furey as she last saw him.

17) "a few light taps upon the window pane" - a suggestion of a phrase in Gretta's story: "I heard gravel thrown up against the window". The choice of the verb "taps" personifies the snow, and suggests that the snow is like the ghost of Michael Furey throwing gravel against the window.

18) "his journey westward" - interpreted by several readers of the extract in isolation as "death", but in fact a specific allusion to a holiday planned earlier in the evening, though the suggestion of death is also present.

19) "Yes the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland" - an allusion to an earlier remark made by Gabriel's cousin Mary Jane:'"They say", said Mary Jane, "we haven't had snow like it for thirty years and I read this morning in the newspapers that the snow is general all over Ireland"', and an indication that his thoughts are still harking back to the party.

This list is by no means exhaustive, yet it will be seen that, even taking this list as complete, sixteen of the thirty-eight sentences in this extract contain allusions whose meaning is either created or substantially altered by a knowledge of the preceding text. An editor would be well advised to offer footnotes explaining any such allusions in an extract, and a teacher to familiarise himself, where possible, with the preceding text. The simpler solution is to select extracts which are not so packed with allusions as the one under present consideration.

2.5 Mood

Though told in the third person, the extract is concerned with the thoughts of Gabriel, the only fully conscious being present at this point in the story. His physical environment - the sleeping woman, the clothes on the floor, the snow falling outside - both reflect and cause his thoughts. His character and thoughts are so inextricably woven into the mood of the narrative, that, for our purposes, it is not necessary to distinguish between them.

To a reader considering this passage as an extract, the character and mood of Gabriel (and of the extract) may appear maudlin, self-pitying, over-demanding and fruitlessly introspective. The first sentence to specifically describe his thoughts creates exactly this impression:

"It hardly pained him now, to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life."

The interjection of "her husband" seems both demanding and bitter. Later he refers to "his own foolish speech". He continually dwells on the past and, when he thinks of the future, it is only to imagine the death of those he loves. Taken in the context of the extract, the description:

"Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes"

seems singularly inappropriate. Generosity is not an attribute of the man portrayed by the extract, though it is of the man portrayed by the text.

Taken as a part of the text, both the character of Gabriel and the mood of these six paragraphs is radically altered. The greater part of "The Dead" is concerned not with lonely introspection, but with a New Year's party in which Gabriel appears not only as altruistic, the uncomplaining support of his ageing maiden aunts, but also as humorous, eloquent, considerate, self-effacing. In the part of the text immediately preceding the extract he is portrayed as loving and gentle, filled with a tender sexual desire for his wife which is cut short by her relatively inconsiderate relation of her youthful affair with Michael Furey. In this context Gabriel's sleepless introspection takes on a different meaning; his self-pity and preoccupations with the past take on added weight when the reader knows that they are not typical, and their origins are additionally explained as the aftermath of social activity, alcohol and rejected love. The mood of the passage as an extract and as part of a text are radically different.

Passages whose mood is substantially different when they are taken with the text of which they are a part should be avoided by the teacher who wishes to present an accurate impression of the work from which they are taken. The mood of an extract may be created internally, within the extract, or externally, within the surrounding text; the former should be preferred by the teacher.

2.6 Deviations

Literature frequently contains deviations from accepted usage. These deviations may be lexical, as in the use of neologisms, archaisms, compounds, or of one part of speech as another, or they may be grammatical, involving departures from syntactical or morphological rules, or semantic, as in the use of metaphor. In the words of Widdowson:

"In literary writing one constantly comes across sentences which would not be generated by an English grammar but are nevertheless interpretable."

and literature, for this reason, contains

"data which cannot be accounted for by 'the theories and methods developed in linguistics'." (Widdowson 1975, p. 14)

Many works of literature contain, in part, their own internalised grammatical, lexical and semantic systems, comprehensible to the native speaker, but not applicable or appropriate outside themselves or suitable to non-literary discourse. The extract from "The Dead" is no exception.

For the purposes of classifying the deviations in the extract under consideration, I have adapted the categories established by Leech (1969 Chapter 3) and allotted to each a symbol, which is given in parentheses after each category. Two of the categories given by Leech - phonological and graphological deviation - are hardly ever applicable to prose literature and are therefore omitted. Some of the categories do not appear in the extract (e.g. affixation); they are nevertheless listed below as being potentially present in prose. There is not space in this essay to give a full description of each category, though a brief example is given in the right hand column. Deviation of register does not permit of brief exemplification, and an example is not given. Semantic deviation is a much more complex phenomenon than is suggested here, but will nevertheless admit of two main divisions for our present purposes.

Categories of Deviation

Category	Symbol	Example
Lexical: neologism	(Ln)	"brillig" (Carrol)
affixation	(La)	"foresuffer" (Eliot)
compounding	(Lc)	"widow-making" (Hopkins)
functional conversion	(Lf)	"and I shall see/ some sqeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness" (Shakespeare)
Grammatical: morphological	(Gm)	"museyroom" (Joyce)
syntactical	(Gs)	"thou hast ... fastened me flesh" (Hopkins)
Semantic: metaphor	(Sm)	"the mind has mountains" (Hopkins)
personification	(Sp)	"the morning rejoices" (Wordsworth)

Category	Symbol	Example
Dialectical	(D)	"t'll all the seas gang dry" (Burns)
Register	(R)	
Historical period (Archaism)	(A)	"oft" (Keats)

Using the above symbols we may now make the following analysis of the deviations within the extract from "The Dead":

Line no.	Deviation	Type
3	"deep-drawn"	Lc
6	"he and she"	Lf
7,21	"upon"	A
9	"girlish"	Sm
14	"dangled to"	Gs
15	"limp upper"	Ln
15	"fellow"	Sp
16	"riot of emotions"	Sm
20	"shade"	A
25	"cast about in his mind"	Sm
32	"she who lay"	Gs/A
33	"had locked in her heart for so many years that image"	Gs
39	"that region where dwell the vast hosts"	Gs
39	"vast hosts"	A/R
41	"flickering existence"	Sm
42	"the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in"	Gs
45	"he watched sleepily the flakes"	Gs
47	"Yes, the newspapers were right"	R
48	"falling softly ... softly falling"	Gs
49	"lay buried"	A
53	"his soul swooned"	Sm
53	"falling faintly ... faintly falling	Gs

(Line nos. refer to the extract, as given below in the appendix.)

Many of theses deviations add to the meaning of the passage. The use of the archaisms "upon", "vast hosts" and "shades" take us into the register of religious English. The personification of the boots make them symbolic of the relations between Gretta and Gabriel. The choice of

"he and she" instead of the more usual "they" reflects both the separation that Gabriel feels from Gretta and their conjugal relationship. The rearrangement of normal syntax creates a lyrical quality, highlights individual words, captures Irish speech patterns and reflects the growing sleepiness of Gabriel.

Yet the semantic subtlety of these deviations is unlikely to be accessible to any but the most advanced foreign learners. They are more likely to confuse him, and to establish deviational grammar and lexis in his use of English. Yet to alter them is to deprive the extract of a large measure of its literary excellence. As Widdowson comments:

"It is not unusual to find literature teachers, both in first and second language situations, attempting to teach 'literary classics' (presumably for either moral or cultural reasons or both) to learners whose knowledge of the system and use of English is so limited as to make the work being presented to them almost totally incomprehensible. Very often the teacher resorts to translation and paraphrase to overcome linguistic difficulties. Such a procedure not only has the effect of misrepresenting the nature of literature ... but also of creating resistance to it in the reader's mind." (Widdowson 1975, p. 81)

and he concludes:

"it is not necessary (and indeed may be undesirable) to select works on the grounds of aesthetic excellence or because they are representative of different schools and periods: the criteria for selection are pedagogic rather than aesthetic or historical and have to do with whether the works can be used to develop sensitivity to language in the most effective way. It is possible to think of a literature course which contains none of the 'classics' at all, but which nevertheless prepares the way for a meaningful encounter with them at a later stage." (Widdowson 1975, p. 85)

Passages of the greatest literary merit may well be the most unsuitable for use in the teaching of English as a foreign language. In "The Dead" the deviations add to the unity of the whole story, and further complicate the student reader's task of interpreting this brief abstract.

2.7 Table of the cohesive ties within the extract

Let us now identify and categorise the cohesive items in the first seven sentences of the extract from "The Dead" using the coding scheme by which cohesive ties may be tabulated, set out by Halliday and Hassan (1976). In evaluating the suitability of this extract for teaching purposes particular attention should be paid to the column giving the distance between the cohesive and the presupposed item. This item indicates whether the presupposed item is immediate (referring to an item in the preceding sentence) or not immediate (having one or more preceding sentences not involved in the presupposition). If an item is not immediate it may be mediated ("having one or more intervening sentences that enter into a chain of presupposition") or remote ("having one or more intervening sentences not involved in the presupposition") (Halliday and Hassan 1976, p. 339). It will be noted that, if the number of intervening sentences between the presupposed and the cohesive item noted in this column is greater than the number of the sentence in the extract, then the reference item indicated cannot be immediately understood as it presupposes an item not present in the extract at all.

Table of cohesive items in sentences 1-7 of the extract from "The Dead" (The coding scheme is taken from Halliday and Hassan Cohesion in English Halliday and Hassan 1976, p. 333 ff)

Sentence No.	No. of ties	Cohesive Item	Type	Distance	Presupposed Item
1	2	"She"	R12	M34	"Gretta"
		"asleep"	L5	N1	"bed"
2	4	"Gabriel"	L1	N2	"Gabriel"
		"her"	R12	M35	"Gretta"
		"tangled hair"	L5	N3	"flung herself"
		"deep-drawn breath"	L5	0	"asleep"
3	6	"So"	C.31.1	N5	(Gretta's story)
		"she"	R12	M36	"Gretta"
		"that"	R22	N5	(Gretta's story)
		"a man"	L4	M17	"Michael Furey"
		"had died"	L1	M5	"he died"
		"her"	R12	M36	"Gretta"

(Table of cohesive ties continued)

Sentence No.	No. of ties	Cohesive Item	Type	Distance	Presupposed Item
4	7	"it"	R13	K	"to think"
		"him"	R11	N1	"Gabriel"
		"now"	C47.2	0	S2/S3
		"he"	R11	N1	"Gabriel"
		"her"	R12	M37	"Gretta"
		"husband"	L4	0	"he"
		"her life"	L5	N6	(Gretta's story)
5	6	"He"	R11	M2	"Gabriel"
		"her"	R12	M38	"Gretta"
		"she"	R12	M38	"Gretta"
		"as though"	C14.1	0	"he watched her"
		"he and she"	R14	M38/M2	"Gabriel"/"Gretta"
		"man and wife"	L4	M38/M2	"Gabriel"/"Gretta"
6	9	"His"	R11	M3	"Gabriel"
		"her"	R12	M39	"Gretta"
		"face"	L5	N3	"half-open mouth"
		"her"	R12	M39	"Gabriel"
		"hair"	L1	N3	"hair"
		"and"	C11.1	0	(first part of sentence)
		"she"	R12	M39	"Gretta"
		"then, in that time"	R8	M10	(Gretta's story)
		"her"	R12	M39	"Gretta"
7	7	"He"	R11	M4	"Gabriel"
		"himself"	R11	M4	"Gabriel"
		"her"	R12	M40	"Gretta"
		"face"	L1	0	"face"
		"no longer"	R34	0	"that time of ..."
		"Michael Furey"	L1	M20	"Michael Furey"
		"had braved death"	L5	N10-18	(description of Michael Furey's actions)

It will be seen from this table that, of the forty one cohesive items in the first seven sentences of the extract, twenty four presuppose items defined in the preceding text. Nor does the frequency of such items substantially diminish as the text progresses. As late as three

sentences from the end of the extract (line 50) we find the reference item "the", for example, in the phrase "the lonely churchyard", which presupposes the phrase "he was buried in Oughterard, where his people came from" in Gretta's story. In the seven sentences analysed above the most frequent and notable example of cohesive items which demand reference to the preceding text are the singular feminine pronominals "she" and "her". Though it is possible, from the whole extract to deduce that these pronominals refer to a sleeping woman who is

1) no longer young
2) Gabriel's wife
3) has had a romance in her life,

the character and identity of the woman and the way in which the reader arrives at a definition of that identity are radically different when derived from these sentences as

a) the beginning of an extract or
b) the conclusion of a text.

Even such apparently non-referential items as "Gabriel", "asleep", "tangled hair", "deep-drawn breath" and "a man" are significantly altered when taken in each of these ways. The name "Gabriel" is apparently introduced if we read as (a), whereas if we read as (b) the name is not introductory but referential, re-invoking in the reader's mind an already defined character which now undergoes a certain degree of redefinement. The word "asleep" is also defined by the preceding text, for we know the nature and cause of this sleep which follows the release of a long pent-up emotion, the pain of having been reminded of the past, and the excitement of the evening's party. The knowledge of this causality explains also "tangled hair" and "deep-drawn breath", both of which could lead to a variety of misinterpretations if read as (b). Similarly "that romance" and "a man", though they may lead the reader to a correct deduction that Gretta has had a lover other than Gabriel in the past, cannot, taken in extract, lead to a deduction of the essentially innocent nature of that affair which has so baffled Gabriel and adds considerable pathos to the passage. A knowledge of both Gretta's story and the manner in which it was told is essential to a correct interpretation of many of the cohesive ties in this extract. If we present this extract to a foreign learner we are asking him to participate in a process of decoding far more difficult than that undertaken by a reader when he approaches this already difficult passage as a part of a whole text.

3. CONCLUSION

What then can we deduce from the foregoing analysis concerning the choice of literary extracts for use in the teaching of English as a foreign language? The extract analysed contains an unusual density of connections - in many varying ways - with the text which precedes it. It does this partly because it is conclusive to that text, and partly also because of the nature of its subject: the thoughts of a man at the end of an emotionally charged day. It is implied that such a passage is unsuitable for pedagogic purposes. Each section of the above analysis may however furnish us with positive criteria to be used in the selection of extracts. These criteria should be applied with varying degrees of strictness according to the level of English, and the general familiarity with literary studies, of the students involved. Nevertheless, some of the following criteria apply to all levels and may be equally relevant to the choice of passages for use with native speakers.

1) Extracts should be chosen which do not encourage the student to create <u>false texture</u> by making interpretations which, though viable within the extract, are demonstrably false in context.

2) Extracts should, where possible, be introductory (either to a whole text or to a new departure in a text) rather than continuing or conclusive. Conclusive extracts should be avoided.

3) The number of allusions to information given in the preceding text should be analysed and annotated, omitted or altered. Texts particularly rich in such allusions should be avoided.

4) Extracts whose mood is internally created should be chosen in preference to extracts whose mood is created by conjunction with the preceding text.

5) Extracts whose purpose within the text is to show unusual or peripheral facets of the characters involved should be avoided.

6) Extracts containing a low frequency of cohesive ties presupposing items in the preceding text are more suitable.

7) Except with the most advanced students, or students particularly interested in literary English, the density of lexical and grammatical deviations should be considered.

8) "Literary merit" should not be taken as a criterion for choice if that merit is judged to reside, not in an extract, but in its connection with an entire text.

APPENDIX

Extract from "The Dead" by James Joyce

She was fast asleep. (1)

Gabriel, leaning on his elbow, looked for a few moments unresentfully on her tangled hair and half-open mouth, listening to her deep-drawn breath. (2) So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. (3) It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. (4) He watched her while she slept, as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife. (5) His curious eyes rested long upon her face and on her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange, friendly pity for her entered his soul. (6) He did not like to say even to himself that her face was no longer beautiful, but he knew that it was no longer the face for which Michael Furey had braved death. (7)

Perhaps she had not told him all the story. His eyes moved to the chair over which she had thrown some of her clothes. A petticoat string dangled to the floor. One boot stood upright, its limp upper fallen down: the fellow of it lay on its side. He wondered at his riot of emotions of an hour before. From what had it proceeded? From his aunt's supper, from his own foolish speech, from the wine and dancing, the merry-making when saying good night in the hall, the pleasure of the walk along the river in the snow. Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse. He had caught the haggard look upon her face for a moment when she was singing 'Arrayed for the Bridal'. Soon, perhaps, he would be sitting in that same drawing-room, dressed in black, his silk hat on his knees. The blinds would be drawn down and Aunt Kate would be sitting beside him, crying and blowing her nose and telling him how Julia had died. He would cast about in his mind for some words that might console her, and would find only lame and useless ones. Yes, yes: that would happen very soon.

The air of the room chilled his shoulders. He stretched himself cautiously along under the sheets and lay down beside his wife. One by one, they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age. He thought of how she who lay beside him had locked in her heart for so many years that image of her lover's eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live.

Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman, but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling.

A few light taps on the pane made him turn to the window. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark, mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

REFERENCES

Halliday, M A K and Hassan, R 1976 Cohesion in English Longman

Joyce, James 1914 Dubliners London

Leech, G 1969 A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry Longman

Widdowson, H G 1975 Stylistics and the Teaching of English Longman